

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

- 2 Cor 11:1-4
 - Simplicity in Christ
- 2 Tim 1:13-14
 - The things Paul taught:
 - Were a pattern – 1:13
 - To be kept as a pattern – 1:14
 - To be taught to faithful men – 2:2
 - Rightly dividing the word of truth – 2:15
 - Contrasted to straying concerning the truth – 2:18
 - To be continued in – 3:10, 14-15
 - To be preached – 4:2

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

- The things the apostles taught
 - A directing, an ordering
 - I Cor 7:17; 11:34
 - Uniform
 - I Cor 4:17
- Pattern, order – church organization
- Eph 2:20-21

THE CHURCH

- “ekklesia”
 - from ek, “out of,” and klesis, “a calling”
- A gathering or assembly of called ones
- Universal sense
 - Eph 3:15
 - Heb 12:22-23
 - Christ the Head
 - Eph 1:22-23
 - Units: Saints
 - Eph 2:19

THE CHURCH

- Local sense
 - 1 Cor 1:2
 - I Thess 1:1
 - Acts 13:1
- Assembled
 - 1 Cor 11-14
 - 1 Cor 14:23, 33-35

THE LOCAL CHURCH - NO OTHER ORGANIZATION

- Phil 1:1
 - Bishops, deacons, saints
- Acts 14:23
 - Elders in every church

OVERSIGHT IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

- Bishops, overseers
 - Acts 20:28
 - Tit 1:7
 - I Tim 3:2
 - Lead, rule, oversee
 - Not lording it over, but examples to the flock – 1 Pet 5:3
 - “Rule over,” saints submissive – Heb 13:17

BISHOPS

= Pastors (verb: shepherd)

- Acts 20:28
- 1 Pet 5:2
- Eph 4:11
- Feeding, watching for, taking care of
- “...they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account”
– Heb 13:17
- “...those entrusted to you” – 1 Pet 5:3

BISHOPS

= Elders

- Acts 11:30
- Acts 14:23
- Acts 20:17, 18
- 1 Tim 5:17
- Tit 1:5
- 1 Pet 5:1
- Idea of an older man – not a novice, but rather experienced and mature, having believing children

BISHOPS

- Acts 14:23
 - In every church
- 1 Pet 5:2; Acts 20:28
 - Oversight of the flock among them
 - Excludes other flocks (churches)
- Acts 14:23
 - Plurality
 - No single pastor system in the New Testament
- No levels of elders:
 - Within a church
 - Or with one church over another

PHILIPPIANS 1:1

- Bishops
- Deacons
 - Servants
 - Appointed – “serve as”
 - I Tim 3:8-13
- Saints
 - I Cor 1:2

This is God's organization for the church in a locality

EACH CHURCH:

- Received instruction from the apostles
- Managed its own work
 - Edified itself
 - I Cor 12-14
 - Disciplined its own
 - I Cor 5
 - Supported preachers by sending directly to the preacher
 - Phil 4:15-16
 - Relieved its own needy saints
 - Ax 4:32-35
 - Ax 11:27-30 – sometimes received funds from other churches to relieve its own

EACH CHURCH:

- Practiced and maintained boundaries of fellowship
 - Made up of the saved
 - Acts 2:41-42
 - Determined incoming fellowship
 - Acts 9:26-28
 - Acts 18:24-27
 - Withdrew themselves from the impenitent:
 - 1 Cor 5:1, 2, 4, 13
 - Received back the penitent
 - 2 Cor 2:6-8

EACH CHURCH

- Took its marching orders from the apostles, not another church
- Carried out its God-assigned work
- Maintained its own boundaries of fellowship based on the apostles' doctrine

Each local church was autonomous

GOD'S DESIGN

- Sufficient in any age and in any culture
- 2 Pet 1:3
- 2 Tim 3:16-17
- Rev 22:18
- Col 3:17

INNOVATIONS

- Hierarchy or structure like this:
 - Central organization directing local churches
 - Conference to which representatives are sent to vote to determine policy
 - Headquarters with presidents or board of directors to determine teaching

The Bible knows nothing of these!

“IMPROVEMENTS”

- Positions or offices like these:
 - “the pastor”
 - The Executive Minister
 - Youth Minister
 - Singles Minister
 - Children’s Minister
 - Donut Ministry Leader
 - Basketball Ministry Leader
 - Youth group
 - Chairmen of the elders
 - Cardinals, archbishops, popes
 - Boards of directors
 - Governing bodies
 - Tiered systems of overseers

The Bible knows nothing of these!

SUPPLEMENTS & SUBSTITUTIONS

- Institutions like these:
 - Missionary societies
 - Benevolent societies
 - Groupings or alliances of churches
 - Preaching schools
 - Sponsoring churches
 - Homes for the unwed, homes for the aged, etc.

The Bible knows nothing of these!

FROM HEAVEN OR FROM MEN?

- Innovations, “improvements”, supplements, and substitutions:
 - Please men
 - Popular
 - Considered advantageous
 - Deemed reasonable
- But lawlessness
 - Mt 7:23
- Such plans:
 - Cannot glorify Christ
 - Cannot be practiced by faith

GOD'S ORGANIZATION

- The local church
 - The saved in a locality
- Clearly defined membership
- Oversight of bishops
 - With deacons
- Doing its own work